

UNRBA Board of Directors
June 15, 2005 Meeting Summary

Prepared June 17, 2005

Our mission: To preserve and protect the water quality in the Upper Neuse River Basin through innovative, cost effective and environmentally sound strategies and to create a coalition of local governments and stakeholders in a water resources partnership.

Introductions and Meeting Objectives

The Board of Directors of the Upper Neuse River Basin Association (UNRBA) held a lunch meeting at 11:30 A.M. on Wednesday, June 15, 2005 at the Rolling View Community Center on Falls Lake in Durham County.

Becky Heron, Chair, convened the meeting at 12:00 P.M.

Chris Dreps presented the meeting objectives:

1. UNRBA Projects Update
 - Reducing Development Impacts (Site Evaluation Tool)
 - Watershed Restoration Projects
 - Critical Lands Protection Planning
 - Supporting Watershed Planning (Upper Neuse Watershed Evaluation Tool)
2. Decide on how UNRBA can interact with two major Upper Neuse efforts
 - Falls Lake Nutrient Management Strategy
 - Falls Lake Land Protection Initiative
3. Propose an outline of the Upper Neuse Watershed Implementation Plan

Meeting attendees are listed below.

Name	Organization	E-mail address
Tom Davidson	Durham Soil & Water	tcdavidson@nc.rr.com
Bob Schaumleffel	City of Creedmoor	citymanager@cityofcreedmoor.org
Becky Heron	Durham County	beckymheron@nc.rr.com
George Rogers	Wake Forest	George.rogers@ci.wake-forest.nc.us
Lisa Creasman	Conservation Trust for NC	lisa@ctnc.org
Mike Jennings	Wake County	mjennings@co.wake.nc.us
Joe Phelps	Town of Hillsborough	mayorjoephelps@mindspring.com
Kenn Gardner	Wake County	Citizens4kenn@earthlink.net
Dale Crisp	City of Raleigh	Dale.Crisp@ci.raleigh.nc.us
Tom McGee	Town of Butner	Tom.mcgee@ncmail.net
Jack Day	Town of Stem	jackielday@aol.com
Vivian Jones	Town of Wake Forest	joyce.wilson@ci.wake-forest.nc.us
Barry Baker	Granville County	planning@granvillecounty.org
Tom Altieri	Orange County	taltieri@co.orange.nc.us
Chris Dreps	UNRBA	dreps@tjcog.org
Sarah Bruce	UNRBA	sarah@tjcog.org
Kent Ray	City of Creedmoor	kray@cityofcreedmoor.org
Sydney Miller	Triangle J COG	smiller@tjcog.org
Vicki Westbrook	City of Durham	Vicki.westbrook@durhamnc.gov
Kathleen Snyder	Durham Planning Department	Kathleen.snyder@durhamnc.gov

UNRBA Projects Update

Chris Dreps updated the Board on UNRBA projects. The UNRBA is focusing on four major areas of watershed management: reducing impacts from development; restoring function to impaired and degraded watersheds; planning for the protection of lands critical to water quality and aquatic habitat; and supporting watershed planning. For details about specific projects, see the UNRBA "Projects and Activities" web page at www.unrba.org.

Reducing Impacts from Development: Site Evaluation Tool (SET)

The draft SET (version 4), User Guide, and Model Documentation are completed. The UNRBA and Tetra Tech will conduct a training workshop for interested UNRBA TAC members and SET Task Group members in August.

The training location has yet to be determined. It should include 15 computer stations, and it should be in or very near the watershed. Kent Ray suggested facilities at Southern Granville County Community College. Becky Heron agreed to contact Durham Technical Community College to find out their policy on non-college functions.

Restoring Function to Impaired and Degraded Watersheds

The UNRBA and partners have identified potential restoration projects as part of the Little Lick Creek Local Watershed Plan, funded by the NC Ecosystem Enhancement Program. Chris presented a summary of the fieldwork findings. Dale Crisp requested a summary of the findings, and Chris responded that he has a summary that he can provide via e-mail.

The City of Durham has proposed several innovative projects implementing the Ellerbe Creek Local Watershed Plan.

The UNRBA has proposed to the NC Division of Water Quality 319 grants program a restoration plan for Lick Creek, adjacent to Little Lick Creek in Durham County. The Falls Lake Initiative Partners have proposed a restoration plan for Knap of Reeds Creek.

Planning for the Protection of Critical Lands

The goal of UNRBA critical lands protection planning is to prioritize lands for protection in the Upper Neuse. The UNRBA is completing the Little River Riparian Corridor Conservation Plan, and the Little Lick Creek Local Watershed Plan includes a critical land protection component.

The UNRBA is a partner in the Falls Lake Land Protection Initiative, which seeks to identify and protect lands critical to water quality throughout the Basin. The Falls Lake Initiative is described in more detail later in this summary.

Supporting Watershed Planning: Watershed Evaluation Tool (WET)

The WET is a GIS-based watershed delineation tool that UNRBA is developing in conjunction with the US Geological Survey (USGS) and the NC Ecosystem Enhancement Program. On May 3, the USGS released the draft WET to the task group. Task group members are now testing the tool, and the USGS will make revisions later this summer.

Linking Major Upper Neuse Management Efforts

The Board heard presentations about two major efforts beginning in the Upper Neuse River Basin, the Falls Lake Nutrient Management Strategy process and the Falls Lake Land Protection Initiative.

Falls Lake Nutrient Management Strategy Process

Chris Dreps spoke briefly about the monitoring, modeling, and stakeholder process. He also presented the proposed timeline. See the meeting PowerPoint presentation for more detail (www.unrba.org/meetings/).

The NC Division of Water Quality has held one stakeholder information meeting, and another is planned for July 8, 1 p.m. at the TJCOG offices. The NCDWQ is also forming a technical advisory committee to provide guidance for monitoring and modeling. After the July 8 meeting, George Hunt of NCDWQ will meet with people interested in participating on the DWQ TAC.

Joe Phelps asked to what extent the modeling effort will enable sources of pollutants to be determined. Sydney Miller, TJCOG, responded that the tributary data to be used in both the in-lake nutrient response model and the watershed loading model will allow some basic source information to be determined, such as geographic source, but that the source category (e.g., land use) cannot be determined from monitoring data alone.

Another board member asked whether the nutrient management strategy will account for changing management strategies, for example the adoption of new stormwater management ordinances. Sydney Miller responded, "No". The nutrient management strategy will assess current nutrient "mass loading" to Falls Lake from all sources, compare those to the "target loads" needed to manage the lake's water quality, and "allocate" allowable loads to jurisdictions and other entities that will presumably (based on the models) meet the targets. Whether or not the targets are met will be determined by analysis of monitoring data. No future or "what-if scenarios" are involved. However, Chris Dreps said that the UNRBA's management plan should model the effects of any "what-if" management scenarios on water quality. Thus, the Upper Neuse Watershed Management Plan is an opportunity for local governments to propose strategies to the state for flexible, innovative management of nutrients in the watershed.

Falls Lake Initiative

Lisa Creasman, Conservation Trust for NC, spoke about the Falls Lake Initiative. The Conservation Trust for NC (CTNC) is land trust and umbrella organization for land trusts in North Carolina. CTNC helps facilitate strategic land conservation partnerships between trusts, local governments, and other partners.

The objective of the Falls Lake Initiative is to protect water quality through strategic conservation efforts. Land preservation is one of the most cost-effective ways to protect and maintain water quality. Land trusts are involved in the Falls Lake Initiative because they facilitate voluntary land protection activities between willing landowners and other parties. Land trusts also help identify and prioritize threatened lands for strategic protection efforts. The UNRBA is involved because of our experience working to protect water quality in the Falls Lake Basin.

Falls Lake Initiative partners include local trusts (Triangle Greenways Council, Triangle Land Conservancy, Eno River Association, Tar River Land Conservancy), national trusts

(Trust for Public Land), local governments (Raleigh, Wake County), regional councils (TJCOG, Kerr-Tar COG), and river protection groups (Neuse River Foundation, Upper Neuse River Basin Association).

The Falls Lake Initiative includes three phases:

1. Create comprehensive coordinated conservation plan in the Upper Neuse (to be done in 1 year);
2. Increase significantly the outreach to landowners, local government officials, and the general public; and
3. Acquire land or conservation easements on priority lands identified by the plan.

Lisa Creasman commended the UNRBA on having such an evolved watershed management program. Ms. Creasman noted that a great deal of groundwork important to the success of the Falls Lake Initiative has already been laid. She said that having involved stakeholders, good data, and high-quality planning is necessary for the success of land conservation efforts.

The partnership has applied for funding from various sources, including the NC Attorney General's Environmental Enhancement Grants program, the NC Clean Water Management Trust Fund, and US EPA Section 319 Grant funding (administered by NC Division of Water Quality). In addition, CTNC and other partners are lobbying for a \$1 billion bond for land protection. This effort, called "Land for Tomorrow" already has the sponsorship of 34 legislators.

Becky Heron noted that Durham County has an active farmland acquisition program that allows farmland to be inherited and to remain in agricultural use through conservation easements. Such programs, which allow some uses compatible with conservation to continue, are very important to the success of the overall preservation effort.

Ms. Creasman invited Board members to contact Reid Wilson of the Conservation Trust for NC for more information on the Falls Lake Initiative. Updates on land conservation-related activities should be directed to Chris Dreps.

Integrating Falls Lake Efforts

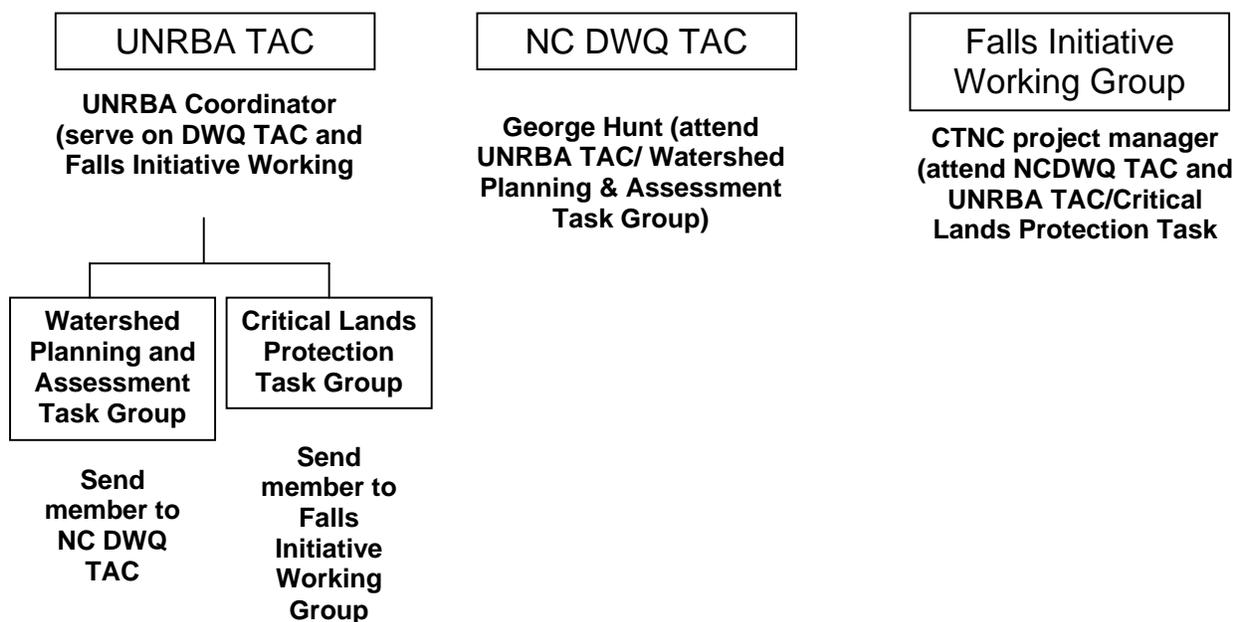
Chris Dreps provided a handout describing several common components shared among the Upper Neuse Watershed Management Plan, the Falls Lake Nutrient Management Strategy, and the Falls Lake Initiative. There are several potential overlaps where coordination between the UNRBA TAC, the NC Division of Water Quality, and the Falls Lake Initiative partnership would be useful:

- Focus Area—Falls Lake (in addition, the UNRBA is concerned with other water supply watersheds in the Upper Neuse)
- Stakeholders—All efforts must include local government involvement
- Data—Data requirements overlap, and the Upper Neuse Watershed Evaluation Tool can provide much of these data.
- Watershed Modeling—pre-modeling data prep can be consolidated. Watershed modeling for the Falls Lake portion of the Upper Neuse Plan (version 2) and Falls Lake Nutrient Management Strategy could be one in the same and could model the priority lands recommended by the Falls Lake Initiative.
- Time Frame—each project is in beginning stages now.

Chris Dreps also talked about the how the next version of the Upper Neuse Watershed Management Plan could integrate products from the various efforts.

1. The Falls Lake Nutrient Management Strategy
2. Nutrient management strategies for the remaining water supply reservoirs
3. The Falls Lake Initiative's critical lands protection analysis (modeled as part of a "conservation management scenario")
4. Restoration plans for impaired and degraded watersheds
5. Additional strategies recommended for meeting the UNRBA's multiple management objectives (for example, aquatic habitat protection, recreation, flood damage prevention, drought, etc.)

Chris Dreps then proposed an approach for integrating the planning processes. This approach is meant to maximize efficiency and minimize staff meeting time while meeting the objectives of the UNRBA, DWQ, and Falls Lake Initiative. He recommended that the UNRBA TAC should be the planning and management arm for providing local government input into both the Falls Lake Nutrient Management Strategy and the Falls Lake Initiative. The manager of each major effort would attend relevant meetings of the other two projects. The UNRBA would use task groups to participate in these efforts and provide feedback to the UNRBA TAC and Board. The following diagram shows the proposed approach.



The Watershed Planning and Assessment Task Group would be a new task group meant specifically for sending UNRBA TAC representatives to the NC Division of Water Quality's Technical Advisory Committee and reporting findings back to the UNRBA TAC and Board. This task group would also make recommendations to the UNRBA about how to best integrate the NC DWQ findings into the Upper Neuse Watershed Management Plan.

The Critical Lands Protection Task Group already exists, although they have not met for a while and would need reforming. This task group would serve on the Falls Lake Initiative's working group to help guide criteria selection, analysis, and implementation. The task group would also

report recommendations back to the UNRBA for integrating the results from this major effort into the Upper Neuse Watershed Management Plan.

TAC task groups are objective or task oriented; include folks with special interest or relevant expertise; usually exist for the amount of time necessary to complete task; include expertise from partners outside the UNRBA; and report to UNRBA TAC and, if necessary, Board of Directors.

Examples of task groups that have been successful include the Site Evaluation Tool Task Group and the Watershed Evaluation Tool Task Group.

Dale Crisp moved to approve the general approach Chris Dreps proposed for local government involvement in both of the efforts and to create a Watershed Planning and Assessment Task Group to coordinate this. Jack Day seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Upper Neuse Watershed Implementation Plan

Chris Dreps updated the Board on progress made on the Upper Neuse Watershed Management Implementation Plan. The UNRBA, TJCOG, and Kerr-Tar COG have reviewed local government watershed-related regulations and programs and now propose an outline and a process for developing and reviewing content in the Implementation Plan.

Sarah Bruce presented a brief overview of the proposal, first reviewing the proposed outline for the implementation plan. Ms. Bruce then presented an example of a detailed description sheet for recommendation #12: Targeted Land Protection and Conservation Easements. Each of the plan's 19 management strategies will have a detailed description sheet that includes the following information necessary for implementation.

- Watershed management category (e.g., new development site management)
- Implementation scale (e.g., regional or local)
- Applicable jurisdictions (where the recommendation applies)
- Detailed description of recommendation, including justification
- Basic implementation steps
- Implementation alternatives (other ways of meeting this recommendation)

She then discussed how details for each recommended management strategy would be developed with the assistance of Technical Advisory Committee Task Groups.

Tom Davidson moved to adopt the approach to implementation planning as presented by Sarah Bruce. Dale Crisp seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Becky Heron requested an update on the implementation planning process at the next meeting of the UNRBA Board of Directors.

Next Board Meeting

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday August 17th, 11:30 A.M., at the Down Home Steakhouse in Creedmoor.